



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MAR 10 2006

Ms. Susan Castillo  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Oregon Department of Education  
255 Capitol Street, N.E.  
Salem, OR 97310-0203

Dear Superintendent Castillo:

Thank you for submitting a proposal for consideration to participate in the Secretary's growth model pilot, which will allow selected States to use a growth-based accountability model to meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Each proposal is being reviewed internally to determine how well it meets the seven core principles laid out in the Secretary's November 21, 2005 letter, making it eligible to advance to peer review.

The initial review of Oregon's proposal indicates additional information is needed to determine how it meets the seven core principles. I remind you that an expected result from the pilot project is the ability to analyze how growth serves as a measure of accountability in comparison to the current status model. In accordance with Principle 4, such a comparison is only possible when a growth model and its growth targets are applied to all students and not only to students who missed the proficiency target. As we discussed in our March 9, 2006 phone call, please provide information to answer the following questions found in the Department's peer review guidance (please see [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.doc](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.doc) for that information). The reference in parenthesis is to that particular element in the guidance document:

Principle 1. Universal proficiency

- Has the state proposed technically and educationally sound criteria for "growth targets" for schools and subgroups? (Principle 1.2)
  - What are the state's growth targets relative to the goal of 100 percent of student proficient by 2013-14? (Principle 1.2.1)
    - Please clarify how this model that uses growth expectations for average school growth ensure that all students are proficient by 2013-14?
- Does the state proposed growth model include a relationship between consequences and rate of student growth consistent with Section 1116 of ESEA? (Principle 1.4)
  - Has the state clearly described consequences the state/LEA will apply to schools? Do the consequences meaningfully reflect the results of student growth? (Principle 1.4.1)

- Please clarify whether the consequences that will be applied to schools that do not meet AYP using the growth model will be consistent with Section 1116.

Principle 2. Establishing appropriate growth targets at the student level

- Has the state proposed a technically and educationally sound method of depicting annual student growth in relation to growth targets? (Principle 2.1)
  - Has the state adequately described a sound method of determining student growth over time? (Principle 2.1.1)
    - Please clarify how the growth targets for each student will be established. Specifically, please address whether the growth targets will be revised each year.
    - Please provide examples for the peers of how the growth model's concept of "on the path to proficiency" will work for students at different achievement levels.
    - Please clarify whether student demographics or school characteristics will be used in the student growth model. Specifically, please clarify the sentence, "While we will not use student characteristics in setting growth targets, student background demographics or characteristics can easily be used to monitor the outcome of the growth model at individual or school levels." (See page 18 of the proposal.)
    - Please clarify whether any school characteristics will be used to develop growth expectations nested within that school.

Principle 4. Inclusion of all students

- Does the state's growth model proposal address the inclusion of all students, subgroups, and schools appropriately? (Principle 4.1)
  - Does the state's growth model address the inclusion of all students appropriately? (Principle 4.1.1)
    - Please verify whether all students in all schools in the state will be included in the growth model, for reporting and for accountability determination purposes.

Principle 5. State assessment system and methodology

- Does the statewide assessment system produce comparable information on each student as he/she moves from one grade level to the next? (Principle 5.3)
  - Has the state used any "smoothing techniques" to make the achievement levels comparable and, if so, what were the procedures? (Principle 5.3.4)
    - Please provide additional information regarding the confidence interval that will be applied to the growth model and how it will be calculated.

Principle 6. Tracking student progress



- Has the state designed and implemented a technically and educationally sound system for accurately matching student data from one year to the next? (Principle 6.1)
  - What studies have been conducted to demonstrate the percentage of students who can be “matched” between two academic years? Three years or more? (Principle 6.1.4)
    - Please provide additional evidence of the match rates for two, three, or more years for the full school population and subgroups.
  - How does the proposed state growth accountability model adjust for student data that are missing because of the inability to match a student across time or because a student moves out of a school, district, or the state before completing the testing sequence? (Principle 6.1.6)
    - Please provide additional detail regarding how the state will classify new, missing, or unmatched students. In addition, please clarify whether, and to what extent, missing, unmatched, or new students will affect the ability of a school or district to include that school or subgroup in the growth model, taking into account the minimum subgroup size necessary for inclusion.

The additional information you provide will be considered an addendum to Oregon’s original application and will be included in the review process for the pilot. **The information should be submitted no later than March 17, 2006.** Please provide the information to Dr. Catherine Freeman at [catherine.freeman@ed.gov](mailto:catherine.freeman@ed.gov).

I appreciate your interest in the growth model pilot. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Dr. Freeman at the email address above or by calling (202) 401-0113. I thank you in advance for your response.

Sincerely,



Henry L. Johnson

cc: Pat Burke  
Joe Stevens